

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 01360 261235Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ICA-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
HA-05 IO-13 FRB-03 TRSE-00 EB-08 /095 W
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P R 261128Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5435
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1360

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SCUL, CZ
SUBJECT: POSTPONEMENT OF US-GOC CULTURAL/SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES

REF: STATE 118518

1. DCM CALLED ON MFA SIXTH DEPT. DIRECTOR ZANTOVSKY
MAY 22 TO EXPLAIN THAT WHILE USG STILL WISHED VERY
MUCH TO CONCLUDE SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION
PROGRAM NEGOTIATIONS AND PREPARE SIGNATURE OF THE
UMBRELLA CULTURAL-EDUCATIONAL-SCIENTIFIC-TECHNOLOGICAL
EXCHANGES AGREEMENT AGREED UPON DECEMBER 1, 1976, CURRENT
BILATERAL DIFFICULTIES HAVE LED WASHINGTON TO CONCLUDE
THAT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO CONTEMPLATE A FORMAL
SIGNING CEREMONY. DCM RECALLED RECENT EXPULSION
OF AP CORRESPONDENT REID AND REFUSAL OF VISA TO
BALTIMORE SUN REPORTER PIPER, PROBLEMS AMERICAN
JOURNALISTS HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN PRAGUE OVER THE PAST
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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 01360 261235Z

YEAR, RECENT SIGNS OF HEIGHTENED SURVEILLANCE OF CZECHS
TRYING TO VISIT THE CHANCERY AND EMBOFFS SIMPLY DOING
THEIR JOBS, AND NOTED THAT SUCH DIFFICULTIES, ACROSS
THE BACKDROP OF FAMILIAR DIFFERENCES OVER HUMAN RIGHTS,
CALLED FOR A PAUSE. PERHAPS THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS
COULD BE COMPLETED AND AN APPROPRIATE SIGNING CEREMONY
WORKED OUT AFTER THE AUGUST VACATION PERIOD.

2. ZANTOVSKY DID NOT SEEM SURPRISED TO LEARN OF OUR DESIRE FOR A POSTPONEMENT. HE INITIALLY PHILOSOPHIZED THAT GOC COULD EASILY CARRY ON ITS FOREIGN POLICIES WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, IF THE U.S. PREFERRED TO REFRAIN FROM EFFORTS TO BUILD BILATERAL RELATIONS. TURNING TO PROBLEMS OVER AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, HE DISPLAYED SOME IRRITATION ABOUT THEIR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO CONCENTRATE ON REPORTING VIEWS OF LOCAL (I.E., CHARTER 77) DISSIDENTS. HE MADE A POINT OF SHARPLY CRITICIZING RECENT EDITORIALS ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY FORMER N.Y. TIMES SENIOR EDITOR JOHN OAKES, ESPECIALLY SINCE OAKES HAD VISITED PRAGUE ON A TOURIST RATHER THAN A JOURNALIST'S VISA. IN REJOINER, DCM EMPHASIZED INABILITY OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS, WHO COULD UTILIZE AMERICAN PRESS TO GET ACROSS OFFICIAL VIEWS.

3. DCM ALSO INFORMED ZANTOVSKY THAT SENATOR MCGOVERN WOULD BE DELAYING HIS PLANNED VISIT TO PRAGUE FROM JUNE TO LATE JULY-EARLY AUGUST. ZANTOVSKY APPRECIATED LEARNING THIS AND INDICATED HE MIGHT MAKE USE OF THE MCGOVERN VISIT TO PUSH FORWARD CZECHOSLOVAK PLANS FOR SENDING A PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON.

4. ZANTOVSKY THEN SAID HE WANTED TO RAISE A MATTER
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PAGE 03 PRAGUE 01360 261235Z

THAT GOC FOUND PARTICULARLY ANNOYING --THE PROSPECT OF A CALL ON THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE "SEPARATIST" WORLD CONGRESS OF SLOVAKS. HE SAID AMBASSADOR JOHANNES HAD DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM LAST WEEK WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS, WHO HAD NOTED THAT IF SUCH A CALL TOOK PLACE IT WOULD BE AT THE LEVEL OF CZECHOSLOVAK DESK OFFICER GLENN. ZANTOVSKY STRESSED THAT RECEPTION OF SLOVAK REPS AT ANY LEVEL BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WOULD SERIOUSLY TROUBLE GOC BECAUSE THE GROUP ACTIVELY ADVOCATES "THE BREAKING UP OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK STATE". DCM NOTED THE INFINITE DIVERSITY OF EASTERN EUROPEAN GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES, MOST OF WHOM EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO DISCUSS THEIR VIEWPOINTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT. HE PROMISED, HOWEVER, TO COMMUNICATE ZANTOVSKY'S REMARKS.

5. ON LEAVING THE MINISTRY, DCM TOLD ZANTOVSKY THAT EMBASSY FOUND IT PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PREPARE A RECEPTION BY AMBASSADOR AT THE INCHEBA FAIRGROUNDS IN LATE JUNE AND SINCE BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS PRECLUDED CONTRACTING WITH A BRATISLAVA HOTEL FOR THE EVENT TO BE CATERED, WE WOULD BE HOLDING THE RECEPTION IN LONG-VACANT U.S.

CONSULATE GENERAL FACILITIES. ZANTOVSKY NODDED NEGATIVELY, POINTING OUT THAT EMBOFFS MIGHT WELL USE THE CG FOR OVERNIGHT STAYS IN BRATISLAVA EN ROUTE TO VIENNA, BUT THE FACILITIES ARE NOT TO BE USED FOR "OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS" (SEE SEPTTEL).

5. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY HAS OBSERVED A CONSIDERABLE TIGHTENING OF INTERNAL CONTROLS OF ALL KINDS RECENTLY (PRAGUE 1327). THIS TIGHTENING HAS ALREADY AFFECTED ADVERSELY THE EMBASSY'S CONTACTS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKS OF ALL KINDS--BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL. WE EXPECT THAT OUR DECISION TO FOREGO SIGNING THE EXCHANGES ACCORD WILL SLOW DOWN STILL FURTHER OUR OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS HERE THROUGH THE SUMMER, THOUGH ZANTOVSKY INDICATED GOC CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 PRAGUE 01360 261235Z

WOULD WISH TO CONTINUE ROUTINE ACTIVITIES AND DCM RECIPROCATED THIS DESIRE. IN THIS REGARD, IT IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT ZANTOVSKY HAS BEGUN TO TAKE THE LINE WITH US THAT "NOW IS NOT THE TIME" FOR ANY INITIATIVES ON THE CLAIMS/GOLD ISSUE AND THAT THERE IS "NO WAY" THE GOC WILL AGREE TO A GREAT INCREASE IN THE TOTAL OF THE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT.
BYRNE

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